

A couple of months back, my husband and I attempted to work with teachers and school board members to see if the Kindergarten week schedule could be moved back to 4 days. We were under the impression that we had no other option, but to either send them the full amount or be considered truant. In just this simple example, we saw how little input we even had at present in our school system. We were told, by OPI "education experts" and the teachers and administration, that without the fifth day of school it would be impossible for our Kindergarteners to achieve these common core standards.

After attending numerous board meetings and hearing testimonies from concerned parents and a former school psychologist, the board voted down our request. This was despite the fact that 7 out of the 11 families wanted a four day week and the other 4 families were fine with either decision. This was also decided by board members where only 2 out of the 7 would ever have upcoming Kindergartners. It was again stated to us by the teachers that they could not hit these standards without this fifth day.

One could spend a considerable amount of time trying to decipher what the key component that fifth day brings, especially as the hours are more than double what is required by the state. However, what stood out in my mind is how already the interest of the parents is shoved aside for these standards. I saw a group of teachers tell me that they cannot and will not do something because of these standards. And if I disagree with these standards in any way, I will not have one ounce of say in the educational aspect of the most treasured life that I have the privilege of raising. I cannot opt my children out of anything and I cannot protect their information once it has left my control. This is all being done regardless of my ethics and morals.

I had envisioned a school that would be open to parents providing their gifts and talents to the school, enriching it. In the process of all this, I discovered that teachers here are not open to parents and other activities (science fairs, field days, parent volunteers), because they are a distraction and will not allow them to complete the necessary class work to hit these new standards. Whether or not this is true, we the parents were kindly uninvited to be a part of our child's class room as well as any educational based activity that was not aligned with these standards.

At what point has the government stretched too far under the guise of higher standards? Sealing parents mouths and tying their hands while their children are being instructed things against their will is wrong. Parents' right to speak out when they disagree with the school needs to be protected.

We implore the interim education committee to pay close attention to the loss of parental control that is occurring throughout the state.

Petra Yirsa

Education & Local Gov't Committee  
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Exhibit 12